

REMARKS

This amendment, submitted in response to the Office Action dated February 3, 2005, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested

Claims 1-6, 8-12 and 15-26 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15-21 and 24-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over previously-cited Honda (U.S. 5,233,989).

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Honda in view of previously-cited Luo et al (U.S. 5,901,240).

Claims 1, 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over newly-cited Ito (EP 0677780 A2) in view of Honda.

Applicant submits that Honda fails to teach or suggest the feature of claim 1 of transferring at least one original image signal, which is among the plurality of the original image signals, to an image output device, prior to the operation-processed image signal being obtained from the predetermined operation processing. The Examiner concedes that Honda does not explicitly disclose this feature of the claim, but asserts that it would have been an obvious design choice to modify Honda's system to allow the original images to be displayed before the completion of the predetermined process, because Applicant has not disclosed that this would have any significant advantages or solve any stated problem. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

First, Applicant submits that transferring at least one original image signal to an image output device prior to the operation-processed image signal being obtained from the predetermined operation processing does provide a significant advantage over the prior art. As stated on page 28 of the present specification:

Therefore, a displaying waiting state does not occur before the superposition image is displayed. Accordingly, before the superposition image is displayed, temporary processing, such as a preliminary diagnosis, can be performed by use of the displayed stimulating ray irradiation surface side image. Also, the addition operation can again be performed on the plurality of the transferred original image signals and with altered parameters for the addition operation on the side of the operation processing and displaying terminal 300, and a superposition image obtained from the addition operation with the altered parameters can again be outputted by the operation processing and displaying terminal 300. The features are advantageous in practice.

Thus, transferring at least one original image signal to an image output device prior to the operation-processed image signal being obtained from the predetermined operation processing does provide a significant advantage over the prior art. Accordingly, modifying Honda as suggested by the Examiner would not have been an obvious design choice.

Second, Honda discloses a system in which the original images need to be processed prior to outputting any of the original images. As described in Honda, the first X-ray imaging system 100 includes:

a judging unit 14 for judging whether or not the coded image data corresponds to contrast image data and for issuing a mixture signal "S_m" (i.e., a contrast medium is mixed with one original image "X_i"). This mixture signal "S_m" is supplied to both the original image frame memory 6 and a display unit

16. A switching element 15 is also employed in the first X-ray imaging system 100.

When an operator transmits an operation signal "S₀" to this switching element 15 and at the same time, the mixture signal "S_m" is supplied to the original image frame memory 6, this switching element 15 is turned ON (closed) whereby the original image data are successively supplied via the switching element 15 to the display unit 16.

Col. 4, lines 47-61 of Honda. In other words, until the mixture signal "S_m" is produced and supplied to the original image frame memory 6 (and the operator transmits an operation signal "S₀"), the original image data cannot be supplied to the display unit 16. Thus, modifying the teachings of Honda as suggested by the Examiner would fundamentally alter the operation of Honda's system. Such a modification would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable over Honda.

Applicant submits that claims 2, 3, 17, 19 and 24 are allowable over Honda, at least because of their dependence from claim 1.

For independent claims 4 and 8, Applicant submits that claims 4 and 8 are allowable for reasons analogous to those for claim 1.

Also, Applicant submits that claims 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 25 and 26 are allowable, at least because of their dependence from claims 4 and 8, respectively.

With further regard to claims 12 and 15, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to replace the CRT of Honda with the liquid crystal panel display device recited in the

claims, because Honda teaches that modification and changes are welcome to improve his system. Based on the Examiner's reasoning, any modification to Honda would have been obvious. Clearly, this is not the case. The alleged obviousness of a modification to a reference must be more specific than the idea that modifications are welcome to improve the system.

Further, the Examiner asserts that replacing the CRT with an LCD display would save space. However, as argued in the Amendment filed August 11, 2004, there is no suggestion in Honda of using an LCD. Moreover, Honda expresses no concern for saving space used by the display unit. Accordingly, Applicant argues that it would not have been obvious to modify Honda to replace the CRT with a liquid crystal panel display device. Hence, Applicant submits that claims 12 and 15 are allowable for this additional reason.

For the rejection of claim 10, Applicant submits that claim 10 is allowable, at least because of its dependence from claim 4 and because Luo does not make up for the deficiencies of Honda.

Claims 1, 22 and 23 are rejected as being unpatentable over Ito in view of Honda. The Examiner relies on Honda for a suggestion of the feature of claim 1 of transferring at least one original image signal, which is among the plurality of the original image signals, to an image output device, prior to the operation-processed image signal being obtained from the predetermined operation processing, as described above in relation to the rejection over Honda. The Examiner concedes that Ito does not teach or suggest this feature of the claim. See page 8 of

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Office Action. In light of the comments above with regard to Honda's deficiencies with respect to this feature of claim 1, Applicant submits that claim 1 and its dependent claims 22 and 23 are allowable over the Ito/Honda combination.

Also, Applicant adds new claims 27-31 to further define the present invention.

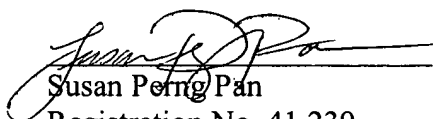
In view of the above, Applicant submits that claims 1-31 are in condition for allowance. Therefore it is respectfully requested that the subject application be passed to issue at the earliest possible time. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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